

Bay Creek Wilderness

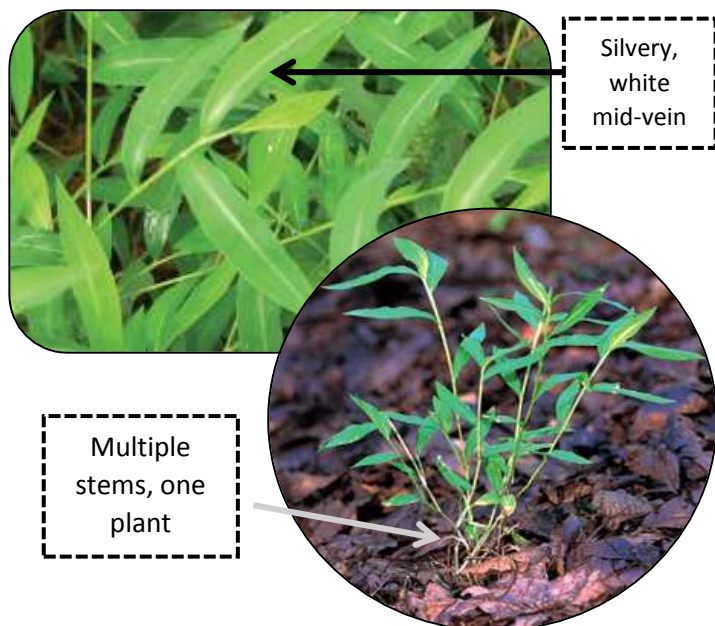
Quest Description:

Welcome to the Bay Creek Wilderness Quest! Bay Creek Wilderness is located in Pope County and was designated as a wilderness area by the Illinois Wilderness Act of 1990. Bay Creek Wilderness is 2,769 comprised of a central hardwood ecosystem with some pine plantations.

Bay Creek runs year-round, creating excellent conditions for woodland species, flowering trees, and a variety of plant species. But despite their natural beauty and diversity, wilderness areas are threatened by the growth of plants not originally from here known as non-native invasive species. Although some invasive species were introduced intentionally to be used as ground cover or ornamentals for instance, others were introduced accidentally or unintentionally. Invasive species can displace native plants and alter healthy ecosystems, degrading diversity and wildlife habitat.

In the late 1910s, Nepalese Browntop (aka Japanese Stiltgrass) was possibly introduced into the U.S. when it was shipped from China as packing material for porcelain (see photo below). Since then, it has made its way to the Bay Creek Wilderness. It spreads on trails and recreational areas by seeds “hitchhiking” on shoes and clothes of visitors.

As you hike along the trail look for this and other non-native invasive species that you encounter on your hikes in wilderness and other areas you visit. Mark the non-native plants you identify on your map – learn what they look like and help prevent their spread by checking for “hitchhikers” before you leave!



Trail Name and Marker: Bay Creek Wilderness

Trailhead – SE Bay Creek Trail (#499M)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Trail Length: 1 mile

Travel Time: 1.5 hours

Trail Type: Dirt

Best Season: Spring, early summer and fall

Possible Hazards: Roots in trail, loose rocks, downed trees, poison ivy, ticks and thorny brush.

Wilderness Ethics: Check yourself for “hitchhiker” seeds, Leave what you find, Pack in/pack out, Respect wildlife and other visitors.

Directions to trail head:

Just north of Eddyville from Rt. 145, go west on to Water Tower road. You will see signs for Bay Creek on your right continue on past Teal Pond, on your left. The trail head you are looking for is just past Teal Pond and a Forest Service Road. You will have to park in the grass on the side of the road. The trail head is on the eastside on the road.

Supplies Needed:

1. Map
2. Water
3. Snack
4. Pencil
5. [Invasives ID page](#)

In Case of Emergency: 911
Harrisburg Medical Center
100 Warren Tuttle Dr.
Harrisburg, IL 62946
(618) 253-7671

For More information:

Mississippi Bluffs Ranger District
521 North Main
Jonesboro, IL 62952
(618) 833-8576
www.fs.usda.gov/shawnee

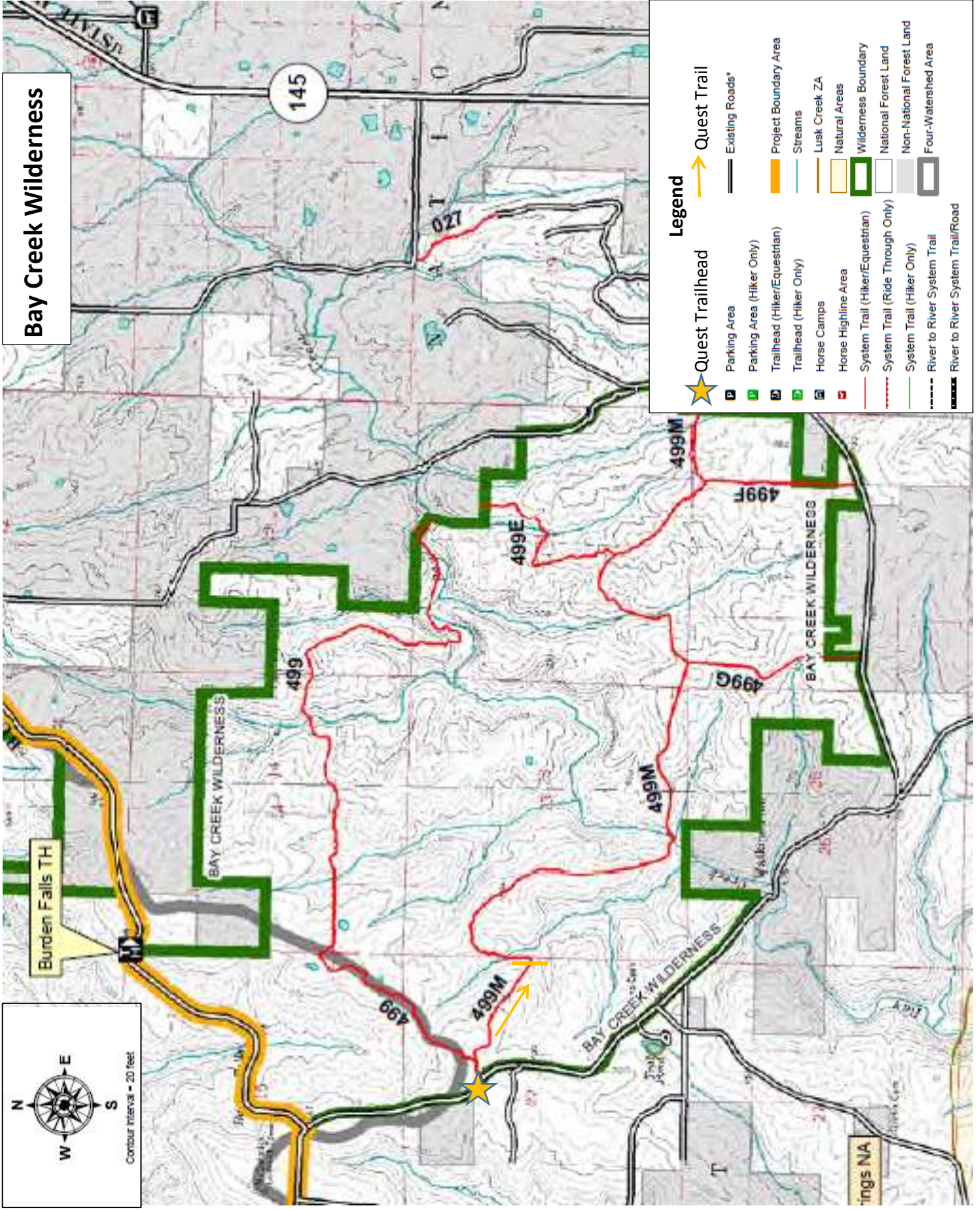


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Contour Interval = 20 feet



Legend

- Quest Trailhead
- Quest Trail
- Existing Roads*
- Project Boundary Area
- Streams
- Lusk Creek ZA
- Natural Areas
- Wilderness Boundary
- National Forest Land
- Non-National Forest Land
- Four-Watershed Area
- Parking Area
- Parking Area (Hiker Only)
- Trailhead (Hiker/Equestrian)
- Trailhead (Hiker Only)
- Horse Camps
- Horse Highline Area
- System Trail (Hiker/Equestrian)
- System Trail (Ride Through Only)
- System Trail (Hiker Only)
- River to River System Trail
- River to River System Trail/Road